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FACT SHEET

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Statewide Electronic Business Services

The Statewide Electronic Business Services Program seeks to identify solutions that will standardize California's electronic filing environment, expand access to justice, and increase e-filing participation throughout the state.

History

In 2003, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) initiated the Second Generation Electronic Filing Specifications (2GEFS) project to develop specifications for statewide electronic court filing. In 2004, the AOC completed validation testing of the specifications. Since 2004, four California superior courts (as well as the California Public Utilities Commission) and a number of commercial electronic filing service providers (EFSPs) have implemented live electronic filing (e-filing) systems using the specifications.

Historically, AOC-sponsored e-filing implementations were locally based. Because of the number of successful implementations, (both AOC sponsored and court initiated), California court filers had more choices for e-filing. While branch standards provided technical uniformity where adopted, there remained diversity of case types, practices, and authorized service providers among jurisdictions.

The successful deployment of the California Court Case Management System V3 (V3) Electronic Filing Module in 2010 will further standardize the electronic filing experience across the state. Although it improves upon previous iterations, the application is not slated for statewide deployment.

The California Court Case Management System (CCMS) provides the platform for the realization of the AOC's vision for statewide e-filing to all courts across all case types. CCMS expands on the functionality of V3 by including all California case categories and electronic service.

In its final form, California statewide e-filing is anticipated to include the following key components:

- CCMS e-filing (all courts and all case types);
- Approved commercial EFSPs (value-added services to lawyers and firms); and
- Self-represented litigants e-filing services (services for self-represented litigants and legal aid groups).

In addition to the branch vision of implementing a standardized e-filing environment in California, the Statewide Electronic Business Services Program is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate infrastructure exists to support and promote adoption of e-filing within the courts, the bar, and the filing community. As part of this effort, the E-Filing Case Management System (CMS) and Deployment Support Program was developed to assist courts in transitioning to an e-business model.

E-Filing Case Management System and Deployment Support

The key objective of the E-Filing CMS and Deployment Support Program is to support the trial and appellate courts as they test and deploy e-filing. This support includes assistance with testing and deployment planning, change management analysis, user training, communication plans, and identification of e-filing best practices.

CCMS development and deployment support

The California Court Case Management System (CCMS) e-filing support efforts include developing project and deployment plans, designing test script strategies, providing testing resources, identifying connectivity requirements, assisting with vendor procurement and integration testing, and providing support to the courts and service providers during pilot project launch.

ACCMS development and deployment support

The Appellate Court Case Management System (ACCMS) support consists of consulting with the ACCMS development team to ensure interoperability with CCMS e-filing functionality. This support will include joint application design sessions, testing, and pilot project support. The benefits of these efforts include time-savings from information exchange related to the design of the appellate e-filing clerk review module, vendor procurement and management, and e-filing best practices.

Interim case management system support

The support of e-filing in interim case management systems consists of providing courts with a road map for addressing planning and operational decisions prior to implementing e-filing. Additionally, the goal is to provide courts with information about various electronic services currently available in the branch and to identify what options are available with their current technology.

Statewide E-Filing Initiatives

In partnership with the E-Filing Case Management System and Deployment Support Program, which focuses on supporting the courts during e-filing transition, the Statewide E-Filing Initiatives Program was developed to ease adoption of electronic services for court filers, with a specific focus on the needs of self-represented litigants. The following e-business initiatives are designed to standardize and provide equal access to e-filing services throughout the state.

Smart forms

There are over 1,200 Judicial Council forms that have been developed to facilitate the processing of cases in California courts. These forms are available on the California Courts Web site (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms), where they can be completed and printed, but not saved. Further, the data entered on these forms must be reentered by court staff during processing.

Conversion of the Judicial Council forms to “smart” technology would enable the forms to be fillable, saveable, and searchable, as well as consumable by case management systems, and more suitable for e-filing and data exchanges. Additional benefits include less data entry by the court during processing, the ability to reuse and share data elements, and the ability to include business validations at the point of forms completion, which will increase data integrity and accuracy.

Branch-owned electronic filing portal

A comprehensive business case is being developed to examine the feasibility of a branch-owned and branch-supported statewide e-filing portal. An e-filing portal will complement the CCMS public access portal by providing a statewide interface to support the electronic submission of documents.

An e-filing portal will increase access to the courts for both self-represented litigants and government filers who now make up a significant percentage of the court filing community, and yet are not largely served by private vendors. A portal further provides statewide uniformity, venue transparency, and a consistent e-filing user interface.

Statewide electronic filing service providers

Commercial e-filing service providers represent an important component of the envisioned statewide e-filing environment. Currently, each court is responsible for locally negotiating contracts with one or more service providers, which results in an inconsistent user experience from county to county.

Establishing a statewide baseline of technical, functional, and service-level requirements would be one method of ensuring that all court filers, in all jurisdictions, have access to the same high-quality vendors and services. The AOC and the courts would benefit from partnerships with e-filing vendors who are able to help establish and meet requirements for California's electronic filing landscape.

Future Directions

The Statewide Electronic Business Services Program will continue to identify and support development of solutions that further the branch vision of statewide electronic services and improve access to justice, promote venue transparency, and introduce efficiencies for judicial officers and court staff.

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